

Building Foundations for Economic Mobility Webinar

Kiersten Beigel: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to our webinar, Building Foundations for Economic Mobility. My name is Kiersten Beigel. I work with the Office of Head Start. I'm really pleased that you could join us this afternoon. We know that this is a super busy time of year for all of you, the beginning of the school year. We also know that you just recently may have received the new Head Start Program Performance Standards that you or your colleagues saw maybe in your spare time. So anyway, it's really nice to have you with us on a Friday afternoon.

We are continuing our series on Building Foundations for Economic Mobility and, in particular, we've been focusing on community partnerships to support families in achieving their education and employment goals. Today we're talking about Two-Generation approaches, or 2Gen, people use the language for short. As you know, that from the beginning Head Start has been a model for Two-Generation approaches, that focuses on both children, and parents, and families together and we see ourselves as leaders in this approach.

And we're also really excited about the movement around Two-Generations, where more and more people are getting onboard with the idea and trying it in different ways, learning about what works. There are so many different ways to do Two-Generation, and I will point out also that I'm going to give a nod to the Two-Generation innovations in our new standards. In particular, in the section related to family and community engagement, the kickoff talks about or the purpose in the beginning talks about integrating family engagement strategies and that programs are encouraged to develop innovative Two-Generation approaches that address the prevalent needs of families [Inaudible] program, that may leverage community partnerships or other funding sources.

That's a good segway language for what we're going to be doing today. Some of us found it very difficult, even if that wasn't the case for many of you. I think a lot of you are word scramble geniuses out there [Inaudible].

[Inaudible] Actually, what I want to teach you all here [Inaudible]. Of course. Of Course. So, I think at this point I'd love to turn things over to Anna Lovejoy, who will introduce our guests, who is certainly in no way a stranger to Head Start. Anna, would you like to take over?

Anna Lovejoy: Be more than happy to. Thanks, Kiersten. Hi, everybody. We are very excited to continue our conversation today about the role that Head Start can play to support families to achieve education and employment goals. Our focus today is, as Kirsten said, focusing on Two-Generation approaches and career pathways, and we are deeply honored and very excited to feature distinguished guests from Ascend at the Aspen Institute and the Greater Birmingham area in Alabama.

Our program is chockfull of interesting content, so I'm just going to go straight into introducing our first guest, who is Yvette Sanchez Fuentes. Many of you know and love her well -- know her well and love her. So, Yvette currently serves as the assistant director for policy with Ascend of the Aspen Institute, and we've invited her to tell us about Ascend's focus on breakthrough ideas and collaborations that move children and their parents toward educational success and economic security. Many of you also know Yvette from her role as the director of the federal Office of Head Start, and before that the executive director of the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association. She has extensive experience and knowledge about early childhood systems and policy, and we are just thrilled that she is

able to be with us today. She's going to share some information about Ascend and Two-Generation approaches, and then we're going to introduce our next panel after that, our innovative leaders from Birmingham. So I'm going to turn things over to you, Yvette.

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes: Great. Hi, everyone, good afternoon. I also want to just give my thanks for everyone joining us on a Friday afternoon. I also want to thank Anna and Kiersten and all of the staff who have been working to put this together. It really is nice to see this all come together. As we go through this webinar today we're going to do a couple of things. We're going to take a deep dive into Gen and give you a quick overview of what 2Gen looks like and also to let you know who we are, here at Ascend at the Aspen Institute and what we do. I'll get into the 2Gen framework and why it's important. As Kiersten mentioned, with the new Head Start Program Performance Standards you'll see that there's some flexibility in thinking about services to children and families, and I hope that this webinar starts to spark your thinking around how you design your program.

And after I talk a little bit about the 2Gen approach I will just provide some challenges and opportunities that I see in Head Start programs, but I think really that you will get a good idea of what 2Gen programming looks like from our folks in Birmingham, Alabama, who I know will talk in more specifics about how they implement a 2Gen program. So a quick thing, very quickly, so Ascend was created as a policy program at the Aspen Institute almost six years ago, and while we talk a lot about 2Gen approaches and 2Gen programs our real goal is thinking about how we can ensure that children and families have the educational success and the economic security that they need to be successful and so we know that from one generation to the next they are healthy and successful as they go through life.

At the heart of the work that we do is really around taking a racial and gender and ethnic equity lens to everything that we think about. At the Aspen Institute, if you're not familiar with the Aspen Institute, you'll know that the Aspen Institute is really a place that has a long history of thinking about values-based leadership and a place where folks can go to exchange ideas and to think of things in a different way. The Aspen Institute has been around since the s, right after World War II, and it's hosted many, many different types of leaders and meetings and diverse folks from across the country and across the world. So our mission at Ascend is really to serve as a national hub for breakthrough ideas and collaborations, thinking about how you move children and parents together toward economic security. We do that in a couple of ways.

We think about how we can elevate and invest in solutions and we do that by hosting convenings across the country, bringing folks together to have open discussions so that we can figure out the products and the tools to better equip and to support and to move the field. We also build leaders and networks and I'll tell you a little more about that, and at the very heart of everything that we do is we always engage families. And so, we do our very best in all the work that we do to make sure that we are keeping the experience and the voices of families at the center of our work, which you all in Head Start know very, very well. So I just wanted to share this very quickly.

I know that there's been a lot of chatter lately around the rising economy or the improving economy and the level of poverty in this country, but I think that one of the things that we've often thought about is that when you think about the American dream and how everyone can achieve it that if folks just really work hard and they take the opportunities that are available to them and they're optimistic that you can achieve that American dream from one generation to the next. The reality, as many of you know just by being in your local programs, is that there are huge demographic shifts across the country. We're

thinking about a new economy where we need workers with different skills and, obviously, the role of technology in everything that we do as we're serving children and families in our programs.

And so, we need to start to really think differently about the work that we do, so that we can actually ensure that families who are stuck at the bottom of the ladder can find those opportunities to get higher and higher. And so, at Ascend what we really do is try to think about what works, so what is the data and the research telling us, but that also means that we want to think about what are the best in innovative practices that are also happening, and what are those things that we can elevate to bring attention to so that we can take those to scale, but also so that communities can use those as tools as they think about their 2Gen approaches for kids and families. And so, I just talked very quickly about the changing landscape in this country.

You all know that across this country parents and children have to navigate a whole field of services and how they apply for them and how they get into them and when do they get into them. So we know that there is a need and we know that we have fragmented policies and programs across this country. You all see it every day, I don't have to tell you, and I'm sure you hear parents tell you every day how difficult it is to be able to successfully navigate all of these programs that they have access to. So what we really want to do is come up with a solution that is really putting kids and families at the heart of the policies and the programs so that we're designing programs that meet the needs of families. And so one of the ways that we want to talk to you about that is integrating a 2Gen lens.

So for many of us who serve families at the local level, we either start with a child focus or we start with a parent focus. And while Head Start has a very long history of serving both children and families one of the things as we go through this webinar that I want you to think about is to really think about how do you consider the needs of the whole family. And beyond considering the needs of the whole family, for example, as you're thinking about family partnership agreements or other resources that you may have is really trying to think about what is it that you as a program need in order to make sure that the whole family is achieving their goals so that they can improve their economic stability. So we're going to go into a quick poll here, I just want to ask folks this question - how many of you collect data on outcomes for both children and parents, and this could be children and caregivers, as well? And if you say yes I want you to think about one or two examples that you could also share. So, okay, so this is Yvette. So it looks like most folks have participated in the poll. The numbers are going up. So I'm going to ask Anna, but those are percentages, correct, 84 percent?

Anna: I believe so, yes.

Yvette: Okay, so it looks like about 84 percent of you are saying that you collect outcomes for both children and parents, about 15 percent say that they do not. As I'm watching the general chat comments what's interesting is that folks are talking about outcomes in terms of parent and child attachment, parenting skills. So one of the things as you're participating in this webinar that I want you to think about is consider the economic side of it. So if you're thinking about family goals in terms of jobs or school or other goals that parents may have, let's think about that a little more. I think it's wonderful that folks are actually continuing to think about the needs of parents so that they can support their children, but I'm going to ask you to just give it a little twist as we go through this.

So going back to a 2Gen approach, one of the ways to think about this is that we focus in on five main components as we do our work -- early childhood education, post-secondary and employment

pathways, economic support, health and well-being, and social capital. And within these core components that can include anything. Obviously, if you're thinking about early childhood education you could be thinking about what's happening in Head Start programs, how our childcare programs at the local level but also at the state level thinking about their policies and their processes for supporting families. And then one that I want to highlight very quickly is social capital, which I would say Head Start programs do really well in how we bring families together. But when we think about social capital here at Ascend, what we really want to think about is what is that community that parents are building, so that long after they leave Head Start they still have that network that they can tap into for any questions or resources or support they may need. And then, of course, you've got health and well-being, and I want to say that this one is really we're talking here about mental health, we're thinking about addressing adverse childhood experiences. You could also be thinking about nutrition.

So, as we think about policies around mass and how those affect families. It's important to really think about this in a holistic way. So over the last six years we've seen growing momentum and interest around 2Gen. The first obviously is starting with the Ascend network, and you'll see that the whole map pretty much is painted in orange, and that just means that we've got partners throughout the country who are at different levels of implementing a 2Gen approach within their programs. We've also got the rural impact demonstration sites, which are funded by ACF, and then there's the family assistance systems, thinking about helping Federal grantees to also implement a 2Gen approach. You've got the HPOG grantees thinking about health services and early childhood together. And then, there's also been some movement within foundations, so the Kellogg Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. And then there's also some significant movement within states, and so you'll see that the purple stars are states where directors of state human services departments have really started to think about how they can design their programs or their policies in order to better support local programs within their states. And this looks very different because obviously they're designing programs to meet the needs of the people in their communities and their states.

So very quickly here, this just gives you a good idea of the continuing momentum and the power of the Aspen Institute. We're thinking about this work through multi-sector solutions, through 2Gen pioneers, thinking about thought leaders, thinking about the behavioral economics of how you implement individuals, the impact on families. Our Ascend fellows, we are not leading into our third cohort. And then, obviously the policy landscape. I mentioned that there's work happening in states, there's also work happening at the federal level. And then just some information, very quickly, on the Ascend fellows. So, here's really the piece I would like to focus on.

So this is the 2Gen program continuum, and obviously it starts with the approach, thinking about the strategy and thinking about your program. One of the things I really want to emphasize here is that when you're thinking about the approach you're really thinking about a culture of change. And so this isn't easy, this is really about leaders taking a role and saying we're going to do this 2Gen approach, but you really have to take the time to make sure that staff and families and parents and community stakeholders understand what the goals are and what the ultimate outcomes will be. So this takes time, a change in mindsets, a change in culture.

When you get to the strategy this is then really thinking about within the resources, whether it's funding, whether it's services, other resources that you may have, how can you align and coordinate those service and resources so that you're increasing efficiency and you're reducing duplication, but

most importantly you're making it easy for families, so you're reducing the burden on families. And then, of course, the program level, so how do you then implement. One of the very obvious examples here would be actually setting outcomes for those children and parents and then tracking those outcomes, so that you have that data as you're thinking about the redesign or making changes to your 2Gen program. I'll just end with the principles around 2Gen efforts.

So obviously you want to measure and account for outcomes for both children and their parents. I've said this over and over, but this is not something that we have to say to Head Start programs, you want to keep the voice and the experience of families at the center and you want to ensure equity. Could you click one more time, Anna? Yes, two more? And then, of course, we want you to also really think about the innovation and the evidence. Kiersten Beigel started by talking about the Head Start Performance Standards. One of the things that I've noticed as those standards were released is that there's a lot of chatter around the fact that those new Program Performance Standards provide for plenty of flexibility for programs to really think about how do they design their programs in order to better meet the needs of children and parents together.

Next slide, please? Sorry.

So just very quickly before we jump over to our local partners, some of the things that I've been thinking about as I think about the challenges and the barriers for Head Start programs to implement a 2Gen approach is just really thinking about what is the collaboration between partners. I know in Head Start we often do MOUs, memorandums of understanding, but as you engage in this work you really want to get specific around who is responsible for what and that's really how you get to the alignment and the coordination of services. We talked about staff buy-in and capacity; again, this is a real change in thinking about how you normally do your work. And then obviously, which is a really tough one and it always has been, it's not easy, is thinking about a blending of funding. So how do you figure out how to coordinate your resources and align them? And I've been saying a lot around resources, which I think we often think about as money, but I would also ask programs to think about their organizational policies. Right? So how do you design your programs? What are the outcomes that you have for your organization and particularly for your staff?

So a couple of quick ideas, some of these you can do within your own program. Some of these obviously require movement from the Federal Government or from Congress. But one of the things that's come up over and over again is the flexible use of funding. As you design your programs in Head Start, I think that we would all agree that while there are many, many requirements there also is some flexibility as you think about what you're going to do. And at the heart of Head Start I always like to say that President Lyndon Johnson, when he announced Project Head Start he always made the point that it wasn't a federal program, it was a community program.

And so programs have always been held accountable to ensuring that they're designing programs that meet the needs of the people in their communities. Another idea or solution would be thinking about eligibility requirements. I know that you all have these conversations at the local level every day, and the Federal Government has started on this path by thinking about birth [Inaudible] competition, which hopefully if you haven't been a part of I'd suggest that you take some time to read what that looks like, alignment of resources and policies. And, finally, something that is already happening is the coordinated training and technical assistance system across funding streams and programs. You've seen that at ACF now, thinking about childcare and Head Start, and ensuring really that everyone is getting the best

resources and information and training that they need. And then at the local level thinking about your change of culture and how we do business. I realized that we probably have a very diverse group of folks on the webinar, could be teachers, could be leaders and programs.

This really starts with the leaders around how they want to design their programs. Talked about this again, but it's always worth saying over and over, I think family experience. You've got to keep that at the center. Coordination and collaboration versus referral only, we did have a time in Head Start I believe for many years where because of requirements, because of a variety of accountability measures, we really were only into referring programs to other sources of support. And it's really about thinking about how do you coordinate and collaborate that. I would also challenge people to think about their intake processes and how you can think about that with other community partners in order to ultimately reduce the burden on families. The role of coaches and case managers, there's some early research that demonstrates that when families have a constant coach or a case manager they make progress around their economic goals.

And then, the last one I'm just going to say is know your regulations. I'm convinced that sometimes there is sort of a myth around what you can and cannot do around regulations, and I think that often we let regulations stand in the way of innovation. So, I would encourage folks to really take the time to understand what the new regulations mean and where you actually can innovate and have some flexibility. So, we do a lot of work with communities. We've developed a lot of tools and resources. Here are just a couple on the slide that you can see, but if you visit the Ascend website you'll find resources on a variety of topics, including early literacy and families, for example, the elephant in the clinic. You'll also see that there is a lot of resources around thinking about the brain science. So, what is it that the brain research tells us about what's important for children and families? And then, of course, also thinking about breaking the cycle of poverty.

So, how do you implement a whole family approach as you design your 2Gen program? So, I would just encourage folks if you have any more questions or any, if you need any assistance please take a moment to visit the Ascend website. You can also always feel free to contact me, as well, as you're thinking about your 2Gen approach. And let me just say this, I know it's not easy, it takes a lot of work on top of all the work that you already do every day, but I do think that as we move forward in Head Start it is a perfect opportunity and time to think about what we can do in our local Head Start programs, but also at a national level to ensure that we're really moving children and families out of poverty. And I will just say thank you, all, for the time this afternoon.

Anna: Thanks so much, Yvette. I just wanted to also point everyone's attention to the resources box on your bottom left-hand side. Several of the resources that Yvette just mentioned, plus several others, are all there listed and if you click on them it actually will open a link to the resources. So hopefully that's helpful to you all. And, of course, you can always, as Yvette said, find them at her website. Yvette, I know you need to jump off very soon, but I wondered do we have time for one or two questions if anyone has any questions for Yvette?

Yvette: Sure, happy to.

Anna: Okay, if you want to go ahead and type your questions into the general chat we would be more than happy to have her answer them. Let's see, while we're doing that, I have a quick question. Can you say a little bit more about the Ascend network because, surprise, surprise, our featured speakers after

you are actually from a program that is a network member, so we'd love to hear just a little bit more about that before we hear from them?

Yvette: Absolutely. And let me say this that, you know, Head Start programs are welcome to be part of the Ascend network. It really is a group of folks who we bring together to share information. Usually our Ascend network folks get first glance at anything that's coming out. It's also the network that we reach out to if we want to test new approaches or we have questions or, for example, for these types of webinars, if we'd rather that folks hear from a local provider versus a national organization. So, I would say if folks are interested in joining the network please check out the website and then you can always send an e-mail to myself or to Leila, who you see on this last slide, if you have interest. And really it's just a place where you can connect with other organizations, again, who are at different levels of implementing a 2Gen approach, but it really is about being committed to figuring out how you do this at the local level.

Yvette: Great. Well, I don't see any other questions coming through. I think you either stunned everybody with your amazingness or just to say. So we know you have to run. We're so grateful for you, for taking the time to be with us today and sharing all these wonderful thoughts and resources, and we look forward to continuing to learn from Ascend and also contribute to the knowledge that you're all trying together. So thank you, again, so much, we appreciate it.

Yvette: Great. Thank you, all. Have a great weekend.

Anna: Our next guest today, basically, a team of partners who are putting this 2Gen approach that you just heard about into practice in real life. And I was struck as I was listening to Yvette's presentation, and one slide in particular, that showed the Two-Generation program continuum, it was like exactly describing what these two partners are putting into practice in their program, so this is really exciting that we get to share this with you and I hope you learn from their story today. It's a story of some visionaries who came together to address an identified need in their community and build a pathway to employment in growth industries for low-income single mothers.

And so, it is my deep honor to introduce Latoya Orr, who is the executive director of St. Clair County Head Start. Latoya began her career 17 years ago as an educator in public K-12 schools and has since moved on to where the real fun is and that is early childhood and Head Start. So since 2013, the small, but innovative Head Start program that she directs has sought and implemented programs like the collaboration with the Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham and Jefferson State Community College to advance its parent, family, and community engagement goal. And she has partnered today with Kay Cochran Potter, who is the director of the Center for Workforce Education at Jefferson State Community College, and she oversees the Workforce Education program which consists of 15 noncredit career programs that are designed to quickly prepare students for entry level positions in careers that are in demand in the Birmingham area. Jefferson State is the second largest community college in Alabama, with four locations, and Kay has been with the College for almost 15 years.

So I want to start things off by asking a question of Latoya and then, Kay, I'll ask you to chime in with your perspective, as well. But I would like to know what is it that you and Kay agreed to do together and what motivated you to engage in this partnership in the first place?

Latoya Orr: Well, as a director of a Head Start program, St. Clair County Head Start, which is located in St. Clair County in Alabama, we're located about 15 minutes east of Birmingham. And we're also a small rural program. We are a Head Start only program, which is very rare. We're not a part of a CAP agency or a school system, we're a single purpose organization. And we wanted to start moving our program from simply analyzing our program outcomes, of collecting data of who was served and who reached this goal and those basic analyzations of data. We wanted to move our program to a place of making some real impacts in the lives of the children and the families that we served.

And so, when I was introduced to Kay we began to develop a professional relationship where we found that there were numerous opportunities that we could collaborate together on and be able to provide real life skills for our single moms who had children that were at Head Start and even for some participants whose children had attended Head Start and had moved on to public school. And so since 2013, with our collaboration that includes St. Clair County Head Start, Jefferson State Community College, our wonderful funder, the Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, and our support system that we receive from the Pell City United Methodist Church, we've been able to make some great strides in our program's goal to move from making those basic outcome reports to making real impacts in the lives of the children and families that we serve.

Kay Cochran Potter: This is Kay. And I always begin by saying anytime I have the pleasure of talking about this project, and I know Latoya shares this opinion with me, this is just the most rewarding work that I've ever had the pleasure to be a part of. So we are so, so happy to be able to talk about it. We do it every chance we get. I would say, first, I would just give a little bit of background information. Our partner, the Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, they were unable to be on the call with us today, but I will tell you as background this all started with them really. They are an organization here in the Birmingham area, their goal is to raise money for the single purpose of improving the lives of women in Birmingham. And they've done a lot of research and they found out that almost 50 percent of the mothers, of the single mothers in Birmingham live in poverty, and of that same population over 40 percent of those mothers don't even have a high school diploma or GED.

So, I think that really caused them to focus and really, really target this issue of poverty with single mothers and their children. And this led to the Women's Fund connecting with the Aspen Institute, and together the Women's Fund was given a grant from the Aspen Institute to create what they called Collaboration Institute, and Latoya and I were fortunate enough to be partners and be a part of that. Really it was an education, where they brought together many, many nonprofits in the Birmingham area for the purpose of learning to work together, which is not always easy even for us nonprofits, that I think we'll all agree that can be challenging. So, that's really how we started. The College, Jefferson State, their primary location is in Birmingham, but we do have a satellite campus in Pell City, which, again, is about 20 minutes outside of Birmingham. So, it just made such good logical sense to put this partnership together, so that's really how we got started.

Anna: That's great, that's really great background, and I'm wondering how many others out there listening in are aware of similar foundations or community college partners in their area that that might just spark some ideas and some motivation to look for some partnerships, so I think it's really great to hear your story. So, I'd love to hear more about what is it about your program, what are the key features that really make it a Two- Generation approach and what does it look like for the participants?

Kay: Sure, I can take that. We've done this two different ways. Initially in the work that we've done with Latoya in Pell City has simply, and I say simply because it's everything but simple, but it sounds simple when you just describe it - we've taken a noncredit course that is short-term, most of these programs are 10 weeks to I think the longest one we've done is 16 weeks, so we put at the College we'll put an instructor actually in the Head Start building.

And so, our mothers are learning down the hall from their children, who are in Head Start class. Latoya has been critical to the recruitment process. She really knows the mothers in her school, as I'm sure all of you probably do, as well. She was able to help us identify moms who would be successful, who were looking to make a change in their life, so those mothers would go through this program, again, simultaneously while their children were in school. The Women's Fund paid for the registration, they paid for transportation stipend, and the church that Latoya mentioned, First Methodist Church of Pell City, they provided meals every day. And these classes usually meet two to three times a week for three hours, something like that, generally they're different, each one is just slightly different. We've done several classes in pharmacy technician.

We've done one for dental assistants, and we've done one for clinical medical assistants. But the -- so that's one avenue, that's one way that we have approached the program. We mixed the model up a little bit, added a little bit to it, and we've also done the program in Birmingham with Jefferson County Head Start, which is a much larger Head Start program, and we've also just done it as a community project where we had two levels of training, Tier One and Tier Two is what we call it. Tier One is usually about six weeks of soft skills training, more training in things like business writing, business etiquette, basic math, those kinds of things. And then at the conclusion of those six weeks the moms then go into a career program. We've done, again, pharmacy technician and we've done vision technician, vision assistant, as well. The second program, the Tier One and Tier Two, includes a career coach, a part-time career coach that is also funded by the Women's Fund, that salary is funded. And I wish we had had the opportunity to do that with Latoya, we haven't had that opportunity yet, but that has been a big, big factor we are learning in the ultimate success of the program. The career coach really makes a big difference. Latoya, what would you add to that?

Latoya: I would also say some of the key features of the program are, well, one is the commitment of all of the partners that are involved. When we were able to sit down and develop our MOUs and get a great understanding of who would be responsible for what, and we haven't had any issues with anyone being lax in their responsibilities, and that has helped us be very successful because the support system that these single moms need to be successful it's in place, it's solid, it's not wavering. We also make sure that we included those key features that the Aspen Institute suggests are key for Two- Generation approaches to move families out of poverty.

The economic support was provided by the Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham. The social support it was provided by the Head Start program and the First United Methodist Church, who provided that link for our participants to the community, a direct link. We provided the education and capital and we were able to provide the education capital simultaneously. Kay mentioned that this took place while the children were enrolled in class at Head Start and the parents were there during the time their child was enrolled. And so, we were able to make sure that the barriers that many of them would have for childcare even to there were some barriers we didn't even realize would exist until we actually got into

the work. And so some of those are the things that are key features for the program or for those that are considering this approach or even a modified version of this approach for them to consider.

Anna: What are some of the benefits that you see, Latoya, among the families that are participating in this program?

Latoya: One benefit that I've seen with the four cohorts that we've had to go through, those young ladies develop a great rapport among themselves and they created communities of support that I'm not sure would have existed if they didn't have this opportunity. One of the most poignant examples of the success of this program, it occurred when I was just going through my daily routine of going to get a prescription filled and I went to a pharmacy, and the young lady who took my order she was a graduate of our program. And interesting enough because of my prior career I knew this young lady when she was a student in high school, I knew when she became a pregnant teen, I was able to witness her grow into becoming a very great parent. Her child attended our Head Start program here. Since then, she's been able to acquire and retain a very good career as a pharmacy technician. She has ambitions to become a pharmacist. And since then she's also gotten married and had more children. And I'm able to see her, she's a living example that our program does work.

This is hard work and there will not be an instant return on all of the graduates, like I saw with that particular student, but there were some cases where there were some students who their tenacity to finish those courses, it inspired me to hire them here at our program. And so, there are a few graduates that have become employees of our Head Start program. So, I would like for those that are considering this approach to understand that you have goals to help parents get jobs within these particular certifications that they're seeking, but there have been so many snowballed benefits and success stories that we could have never imagined at the beginning of our partnership.

Anna: There are a few questions that have come in that I'd love to ask while we're doing this. So, one is the program available for fathers in your area, also?

Latoya: At this particular time the focus of our main funder, the Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, one of their main focus groups is for single mothers. However, what programs can do is when you secure funding find groups who want to focus on providing these opportunities for fathers. It just so happens this is the particular group that the Women's Fund focused on and their research supported, and we had that particular pool of candidates available at our program.

Anna: Great. Thank you for responding to that one. I have another question. So, you were able to say a little bit about some of the outcomes and anecdotal outcomes, but are you tracking your results and are you able to see what happens to them beyond their time in the program or is that something that is aspirational?

Kay: No, we absolutely track, particularly enrollment, number of completers, that kind of thing. Right now about 83 percent of our students have gone to work, which we're very proud of that, we feel that's a very, very successful number. We have served about 122 mothers, 197 children, and again 83 percent of those have actually either gone to work or they're back in school again working towards a degree this time.

Anna: Thank you. And are there specific lessons that you've learned about overcoming barriers or challenges or other lessons that you've learned that you would like to share in the last few minutes that

we have with your colleagues around the country, you know, if you were to provide a little bit of advice and encourage them to follow a similar path as you, what would you say? Let's start with Latoya?

Latoya: I would just like to encourage my fellow colleagues in the world of Head Start to understand that you have to start somewhere. And sometimes we feel like there's so much that we are required to do, but there's so much that we can do to go beyond simple compliance and requirements to really and truly make those impacts with the family and the children, the families and the children that we serve. I would like to reiterate also with my colleagues that my program, we are a very small program. The community that we're located in, we don't have a great deal of nonprofits that are in our community that even have the resources to do what we do. Hence, we had to look outside of our community to find funding. And I would also say that we've learned to be very innovative at our program and we've learned to do a lot by collaborating with those that are willing to collaborate with us.

Anna: Kay, would you have anything else to add?

Kay: Yes, I would say I really thought when we first received the grant that this was going to be easy because someone was giving me money to do, to offer free classes, free books, free transportation, childcare. But we did find, as Latoya said, it is harder because there are barriers for moms, single mothers that aren't obvious, and we've learned that. I mean, just as an example, now we have a required study hall as part of these programs because what we've found is that when mothers go home they don't have time to study, they're single mothers, they're busy. They're doing homework with their children, they're taking them to their activities. Many of them are working. So, we have learned that it is hard, but like Latoya said it absolutely can be done and there are lots of people out there willing to jump on this and support this model.

Anna: Great. Thanks. So, I think we are down to our last two minutes, and I think we probably have time for maybe one more quick question, but I also want to remind folks we will keep the lines open for another 15 minutes or so after the webinar and we certainly invite our speakers to stay on the line and hopefully they can answer some of the questions coming through. I think our participants would really appreciate it. So, let's see, I think another question that came through is -- well, there are three that are kind of cobbled together -- what's the number of participants, is there a recommended number for each cohort and is there a financial obligation for the mothers and how much does it cost? So if you could answer that in one minute?

Kay: Sure. We usually have about 15 to 16 mothers in a class. We tried having a financial contribution of \$40 onetime and it really was not successful, it really just did not work well, at all, so we no longer do that. For the students, all that is required of them is their time and their effort.

Anna: That's great. And do you have a cost per student for in terms of the cost to the funder? I know it's not costing the parents anything, but how much?

Kay: Well, it does vary from class to class. Some classes cost more than others, but I would say less than \$3,000, a student including the stipends that they receive for transportation and everything. I would say, would you agree with that Latoya?

Latoya: Yes, that's an accurate estimate.

Anna: Great, great. Well, we are at the four o'clock hour Eastern, the top of the hour. So, I just want to take a moment to say thank you to Latoya and Kay, and Yvette, and Kiersten, and everyone else who participated behind the scenes in today's event. And, I hope you all learned as much as I did, this was really quite a great learning experience. And I just want to, again, remind folks that we are now going to keep the lines open and hopefully our speakers can stay on and participate in the chat. So, we are going to go ahead and shift to that, and I just want to say thank you again to everyone for participating and we hope to see you again next month. Thanks so much. Bye-bye.

[End video]